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# Lethal Loyalty

How Apple's rise in popularity has sabotaged technological diversity.



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Apple's fame came after the invention of the Macintosh personal computer, initially inviting others to invent new uses for the rapidly evolving technology. However, over the past 4 decades, Apple has gone from leader in innovation to positively preventing it. This article has brief look at the impact of Apple's market dominance over smaller, independent technology companies allied with brand's loyal followers have weakened technological diversity.

Despite being founded 3 decades prior, Apple became a household name with the release of the 2007 iPhone, revolutionising mobile phones with a flat touchscreen instead of physical buttons, a beloved feature of its competitor, Blackberry.

This technological innovation introduced a new audience and a new revenue stream for the brand, propelling it towards market domination. In a 2013 case study on the corporate social responsibility of Apple Inc. Connor Myers makes the comparison between



smartphone profits of Apple and Samsung, the market's leading manufacturers, in the fourth quarter of 2012. Apple had generated 70% of all market profits for that quarter, dwarfing Samsung's 25%. This power over profits some 10 years ago, when the iPhone was still in its early stages, is indicative of the overwhelming brand loyalty Apple has garnered.

As Apple gained more followers and became a household name, other companies that used to bask in the limelight were left in the dust. Blackberry cemented its place in history for its iconic phone designs and tactile keyboards, but with the rise of Apple, Blackberry's sales plummeted. According to the stock market, as of October 2022, a share in the company is worth less than a cup of coffee. How could such a prominent piece of technology be overshadowed so quickly?

Let's have a look at just how brand loyalty plays a role.

Many speculated, correctly, that Apple's decision to eliminate the headphone jack of iPhone products including and after the iPhone 7 would mean being forced to buy a Bluetooth headset or paying for an Apple-owned lightning cable.

In this unnecessary corporate privatisation of accessories do we begin to reveal the problem, how brand loyalty drives monopolisation.

Apple's then-recent acquisition of Beats, which sells almost exclusively Bluetooth devices, became the obvious choice to consumers for dodging the curveball. Surely iPhones don't need headphone jacks if you can just buy a pair of \$250 Bluetooth headphones to compensate the loss, right? Furthermore, this debacle coincided with the release of Air pods, a set of bluetooth earphones the likes of which had not been seen before. Of course, as soon as they were released every tech brand made a version

of their own that varied wildly in quality, but this only underlines Apple's persuasion over technology market trends.

Yes, it was an innovation, but the sway that Apple has over consumers despite the blatant cash-grabs should not be understated. Many people were outraged at Apple's motives, with over 300 000 people signing a petition to #SaveJack, but the company ultimately followed through with the change. Unfortunately, despite the leaps and bounds Apple is making with their new technologies, continued monopolisation of the market poses a real risk to smartphone advancements in the future.

To conclude, Apple has seen remarkable growth over the release of its most popular product, the iPhone, and continues to pave the way for smartphone technology in the 21st century. However, the haste with which the brand reached and surpassed its

competitors, combined with fierce and long-lasting brand loyalty has placed Apple Inc. in a position of power among the smartphone manufacturers that rivals none. These factors create a monopolistic environment simply for the purpose of exclusivity; acquiring Beats, scrapping the headphone jack, and creating Apple-exclusive replacements for the once universal feature seems to be corporate greed over common sense.

The astounding rate at which the public forgave the company for the blatant cash-grab, kills any doubts of faltering loyalty, and creates a concerning image for the future of technological diversity.



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